

# Protecting the Aina - Military Ohana Cleans Up at Fort DeRussy

By Molly Hayden Staff Writer

The military ohana and volunteers teamed up with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, as part of an island-wide "Mauka to Makai" cleanup, Saturday.

Together, they beautified the land at Fort DeRussy.

More than 50 volunteers got their hands dirty as they picked up trash from Kalakaua Avenue to the beach, ending at the berm of the 72-acre park.



A three-year-old joins a group of volunteers to help keep Waikiki trash-free.

The cleanup, in partnership with the city and county of Honolulu, celebrated 2008 Earth Month and Earth Day, April 22.

Projects took place around the island and included the Ala Moana Boulevard Adopt-a-Highway and the Palolo Adopt-a-Stream cleanups. The expo and cleanups gave the local community hands-on activities designed encourage environmental stewardship.

"This is a chance for people to show appreciation for the earth and all that it provides to sustain our way of life," said Park Ranger Garland Ireland, U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Wearing old clothes and gloves, volunteers prepared themselves to get dirty. They cleaned up nicely as more than 30 bags of trash were removed from the grounds.

Col. Bob Takao, commander of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) at Punahou High School, led cadets along the beach, picking up random pieces of rubbish along the way.

"This helps the cadets get involved," said Takao. "It's a good exercise, and it makes you feel good to be a part of something this big."

"Keeping our beaches clean benefits everyone," said Cadet Sgt. 1st Class Kai Cumpston, Punahou JROTC.



A volunteer tosses a bag of trash on the garbage pile during the beach to berm cleanup.

The cleanup was also held in honor of the International Year of the Reef, an effort to help protect Oahu's fragile reefs and ocean environment.



Volunteers pick up trash at the berm in Waikiki.

"We need to protect our lands," Ireland said, "for all of us living today and future generations."

Earth Day was established March 21, 1970, as an annual event to deepen reverence and care for the environment.

"I was happy to join the Earth Day volunteers," said Jim Pennaz, chief of the Civil Works Technical Branch at the Honolulu District.

“As a group, we gathered a significant amount of trash from the beach and berm area at Fort DeRussy,” he said. “We had an excellent turnout, and it gives people a better appreciation of the land when they are involved in helping strengthen it.”